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Santa comes early for Paint Bank Fire and Rescue



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Paint Bank Fire Department was happy that Santa came early this year as they were able to purchase their "gently used" fire truck from Selma Fire Department. Pictured on the left are members of Selma; on the right are Paint Bank volunteers, all Hales, Tinker, Rick and Robert.

Pam Dudding
Contributing writer

When the "hohoho" comes early, people get jolly! The Paint Bank Fire and Rescue teams recently got a couple of early presents and they are still rejoicing.

"You may see someone new hanging around the firehouse. We would like to introduce new Pumper 20. Today, we purchased this truck from Selma Volunteer Fire company in Allegany County. This truck is about as gently used as fire trucks get. This truck has a bigger pump and tank, as well as a lot more storage for organization than our

current truck. It will be a huge upgrade to serve our community for the years to come."

Their older truck was rusting out and replacement parts were hard to find. They added, "It was not dependable and because of that, we felt it could not serve our community in time of need."

The 1990 FMC Fire truck was acquired from Selma Fire Department who gave them a good deal on it and the team already has it in service. The funds were used from their many years of saving and fundraisers, which they shared they are so appreciative of the community for its support.

The advantages of the newer truck are: a custom cab where multiple firefighters can ride, decreasing personal vehicles on scene, air pack seats that help them be able to jump out ready to do the job, 1,000 gallons of water compared to 600 on the other truck and more storage capabilities for equipment.

The reasons for needing a new rescue were plentiful. They were having

See Paint Bank, page 2



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Santa and Mrs. Claus are so excited to see the kids in Craig on Saturday, December 19. He will visit the Fairgrounds at 5 p.m. and be there until 7 p.m. There will be candy and a small toy for every child too, plus maybe a couple of surprises.

Santa Claus is coming to the Fairgrounds

Pam Dudding
Contributing writer

To kids, only from Santa Claus himself!

COVID-19 or no COVID-19, Santa Claus sent a message, "I cannot allow my girls and boys to not get a visit from me this year. So, I am making a special stop and will be in Craig County at the Fairgrounds on Saturday, December 19, just for you."

He had to rearrange his schedule, but was able to do it, just for the kids.

It seems that there are quite a few elves in Craig County that have volunteered to help him make the evening a little more special too, including music by David's Live Sounds.

The event will be held at the Fairgrounds, starting at sunset, and lasting until about 7 p.m.

Everyone is asked to abide by the COVID-19 restrictions, as that is the only way Santa can visit.

He said he may bring a couple of friends also and there will be special things to look at as people drive through.

And kids, there will be candy and a toy for everyone.

Parents are asked to keep their kids inside the vehicles until they stop in front of Santa.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on stage.

When people's turn arrives in front of Santa, they have the option to get out of their vehicle, and kids can stand in front of the stage, and express their "wish list" to Santa and receive a toy.

At that time, pictures

can be taken. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, Santa cannot have kids on his lap or stand beside him this year. They can, however, stand below in front of him.

But Santa said he will listen to every request and get it to his elves for his special Christmas Eve night delivery.

Also, Mike's Dog House is going to be there if people wish to order dinner while waiting in line.

Please honor the COVID-19 restrictions that are put upon this event with masks and social distancing, so everyone can enjoy the evening.

If, while driving in line, in your vehicle, you wish to take a picture of others lighted vehicles or other things set up, you may. (We do ask that no one pass other vehicles while in line.)

Please be attentive to kids as their excitement bubbles over in seeing Santa.

For any questions, please contact Pam Dudding via Facebook. Santa is hoping to provide a time in Craig for kids to have an evening of seeing him, getting surprises and the family to enjoy.

It is a joyous time of year, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ and giving to others, bringing happiness and big grins, and this special event is to add to this season that has been changed by the coronavirus pandemic.

Merry Christmas and Santa hopes to see many people there! HO-HOHO!

McCleary kids making Christmas for Veterans a bit more special



SUBMITTED PHOTO

McCleary Elementary pupils, Keaton, Gunner and Zoie were three of the students who made special handmade cards for local Veterans and tucked them inside colorful Christmas cards.

Pam Dudding
Contributing writer

As Christmas time enters the atmosphere of people's homes, it also enters the hearts of many

during this special season. McCleary Elementary teacher Karen Jones assisted her third and fifth-grade students in making cards for Veterans throughout Craig County.

The students created homemade cards, writing many thanks to Veterans.

To make it even more special, they put their handmade card inside of a Christmas card.

Wrote one child, "If y'all hadn't been there during the revolutionary war, we wouldn't be here today."

Other students sent their appreciation with many thanks regarding the service of vets, noting that they are happy "they made it through the many wars."

"At first, I wasn't going to do the cards because everything is so crazy with COVID-19, but I couldn't let a year go by without letting our Veterans know how much we appreciate them," Jones said. "They gave so much for us, it's the least we can do to recognize them once a year."

At first, Jones was just going to make enough to hand out at the VFW.

"Then I realized it probably wouldn't take many more to send to every Veteran in the county," said Jones who obtained a list

See Veterans, page 2

Craig County High School Yearbook needs more pictures

Pam Dudding
Contributing writer

Everyone knows the value of a great picture. It can bring repetitive fond memories and even great laughs.

Teenagers seem to find this a challenge when taking pictures and excel in their creativity in doing so.

Because of all the changes, this school year has caused because of COVID-19 and many students schooling by internet, Sierra Frazier is requesting participation from the community in obtaining "cool" pictures for the 2020 - 2021 Yearbook for students in grades six through 12. Frazier is the Craig County High School Art Teacher. She is also the middle and high school yearbook adviser.

"To our Craig County Middle and High School Community, the yearbook staff needs your help," she shared. "This year's yearbook will be one for the history books. In 20, 30, 40 plus years, this will be the yearbook our students will want to pick up and show their children."

The yearbook staff invites stu-

See Yearbook, page 2



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY

The Craig County Public Library is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Wednesday from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. The library is located at 303 Main St. in New Castle. For more information, call (540) 864-8978 or visit www.craiglibrary.org.

•New Castle Church of Christ will hold its Bible Study from 7 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. at 118 Main Street in New Castle.

EVERY SATURDAY

Overeaters Anonymous (OA) meeting, 11 a.m. at Christ Lutheran Church, located at 2011 Brandon Avenue in Roanoke. Contact 540-293-4065 for more information.

EVERY SUNDAY

•Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, 8 p.m. at New Castle Fire Hall.
•The New Castle Christian Church, located at 282 Salem Ave, is pastored by Sheldon Cosma is having services at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., with

communion at each, and is on Facebook live at 9 a.m.
•St. Johns Catholic Church, on Route 615, is having virtual masses at 8:30 a.m. and 10 a.m. by Father Steve McNalley. They are also live on Facebook. For more information, contact (540) 864-8686 or send an email to stjohnnewcastle@tds.net.

SECOND MONDAY

•Paint Bank Ladies Auxiliary meeting, 7 p.m. at the Paint Bank Fire Department. Call 897-5346 for more information.
•Craig County Public Library Board of Trustees meeting at 6 p.m. at the library.

THIRD MONDAY

Town of New Castle Council Meeting at 7 p.m. inside the New Castle Town Hall, located at 339 Market Street.

FIRST TUESDAY

Craig County School Board meets at 6:30 p.m. in the High School Media Center.

SECOND TUESDAY

Mountain Lodge 140 AF&AM, 7:30 p.m. at Lodge Hall, 255 Main St.

THIRD WEDNESDAY

The Botetourt/Craig/Roanoke Farm Service Agency County Committee

meets each month at 10 a.m. at the Bonsack USDA Service Center. Please call one day before the meeting date regarding possible cancellation information 540-977-2698, Ext. 2. The Bonsack USDA Service Center is located at 36 Executive Circle, Suite 1, Roanoke, VA 24012. All County Committee meetings are open to the public.

FIRST THURSDAY

Craig County Board of Supervisors meets at 6 p.m. at the Craig County Courthouse.

SECOND THURSDAY

Maywood Garden Club meeting at 7:30 p.m. held at Simmonsville Fire Department.

EVERY TUESDAY AND THURSDAY

Everyone six months and up should receive a flu shot each year. A parent or guardian must accompany those under the age 18. Insurances will be billed. People are encouraged to bring their insurance card and not attend if they have COVID-19 like symptoms. The curbside clinic schedule is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. by appointment only. For more information, contact 540-864-5136.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

The Craig County Department of Social Services Board Meeting will start at 6:30 pm.

Maywood Garden Club continues its mission of making a difference



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Master Gardener Erica Jones and Marge Lewter planting bulbs at the triangle.

Gardens keep growing through pandemics, too much rain, insect infestations and the like. The Maywood Triangle (garden) has been a project of the Maywood Garden Club for some 50 years. It is located on a tiny piece of land where

Northside Road and Route 42 (Cumberland Gap Road) intersect. The club raises money, mostly by an annual auction (but not this year) to keep the grass mowed and pay for planting supplies. Depending on the physical flexibility of

club members, garden and plant maintenance is provided by club members, local Master Gardeners and occasional, family members. The garden layout is designed more for passerby individuals than for an in-person tour. For



Hazel Beeler and Michael Kuric repairing the Maywood Garden Club bench.

the last number of years, we have tried to provide a bench and a place to contemplate Sinking Creek, the local beef cattle and the resident songbirds. The bench sits under a pergola built by a family member of the club. The pergola has autumn type

clematis on one side, and a native (purple) wisteria on the other. These provide some filtered shade and a wind break. And twice in the past five years the (wood) bench has suffered apparent vandalism. The first bench was

totally destroyed and was replaced by Leopold-style bench which recently got vandalized. We had a member and spouse put it back together this fall. Some of the members this fall planted some spring flowering bulbs. Spring bulbs form roots through fall and winter so they can send up flowers in the spring. I've discovered that Darwin type tulips will actually last a couple of years in the ground if they are planted deep enough - that is, about 12" deep. I'm also trying for new this year two different types of alium. Alium are generally pretty drought resistant, spread a little bit, and bloom faithfully every year. If you call them onions, people can get turned off. Bulbs need some moisture in the soil to form roots so be sure to water them if your soil is dry.

-Submitted by Erica Jones

Governors push regional gas tax as states battle COVID-19 pandemic

- Small businesses and consumers likely to suffer under increased gasoline taxes and energy costs -

While the governors of eleven Northeast and mid-Atlantic states try to contain the shattering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, they are actively considering plans for the largest gasoline tax in history. At the urging of a little-known regional compact, the Transportation Climate Initiative administered by the Georgetown Climate Center, the states are considering the first regional gasoline tax in history. The compact between the states would restrict the sale of gasoline, establish an ever-increasing tax scheme, and develop new government spending programs for projects such as bike lanes and electric vehicles. Participating states include Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia. The initial TCI proposal outlined \$4 billion in new tax revenue, equating to an approximately 17 cent per gallon increase at the gasoline pump in the first year. More recent program designs show the program would raise gasoline prices in 2022 by 19.6 cents per gallon and rise steadily to 32 cents per gallon by 2032. This is an average price increase of almost 26 cents per gallon over the ten-year period, raising over \$73 billion in revenue from eleven states. Significantly, the Georgetown Climate Center acknowledges that the program will likely only yield an additional six percent in emission reductions. That's right, \$73 billion for six percent more in emission reduction. A new multi-state bu-

reaucracy would administer the program and determine how to spend the proceeds. Depending on the state, this would be done with limited or no legislative oversight, meaning any future TCI tax increase is a fait accompli. Decisions on this proposal will be made in the next several weeks. Although public support is dwindling as consumers realize the increase in their everyday expenses, the Governors are moving forward with the tax, cap and spend program and pushing an agreement by year's end. Mike O'Halloran, Maryland and Delaware State Director of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), predicts the costs of a new multi-state bureaucracy and increases in gasoline taxes will be devastating. He says, "it is very unfortunate to impose a major tax increase that will affect consumers and business while COVID-19 is hammering communities. The region is reeling under record unemployment where 11 million people

remain jobless - double the rate from February, according to a recent article in the Washington Post. People cannot afford to pay more at the pump and small businesses will not be able to sustain the fallout." Rob Underwood, President of Energy Marketers of America, is concerned the revenue raised by TCI will not be spent on the most critical transportation and emission reduction projects but will instead be siphoned into a variety of other states' needs. Underwood says, "Those taxes will go to a multi-government run entity and taken out of the local community. TCI has already promised 35 percent to environmental justice advocates. Before this is all said and done, what other non-affiliated initiatives will be funded by motorists across the region?" These proposals will come as a surprise to hard-working citizens who are opposed to paying more at the pump for gasoline. The

public deserves to know the truth about hidden costs underlying the calls to fight climate change. -Submitted by Rob Underwood, President of the Energy Marketers of America

www.newcastlerecord.com

Job Opportunity in Craig County

The Craig County Electoral Board is seeking qualified applicant for the position of General Registrar/Director of Elections. Qualified applicants must apply by 12/22/20. Applicants must be a resident and qualified voter in Craig County or willing to re-locate. A complete job description and application information may be found at www.vote@raigcountyva.gov or by mail to the Craig County Electoral Board, P.O. Box 8, New Castle, Va.

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OPINION

Book Awards

Library Corner
Empowering individuals to build a stronger community

Did you ever wonder what it means when a book has one of those gold stickers indicating it is an award-winner? Here you will find an explanation for some of the book awards you may see. Perhaps your next book will be a selection trusting that one of these awards makes that book worthy of your attention!

Pulitzer Prize
Joseph Pulitzer, a renowned journalist, established this award in 1917. Since 1984, Pulitzer winners have received their prizes from the president of Columbia University at a luncheon in May in the rotunda of the Low Library in the presence of family members, professional associates, board

members and the faculty of the School of Journalism. This year's winner for Fiction was Colson Whitehead, and this was his second Pulitzer.

Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence

The Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction, established in 2012, recognize the best fiction and nonfiction books for adult readers published in the U.S. in the previous year and serve as a guide to help adults select quality reading material. They are the first single-book awards for adult books given by the American Library Association and reflect the expert judgment and insight of library professionals who work closely with adult readers.

The International Booker Prize

This prize is awarded to an English-language book and honors not just the book, but the author for outstanding achieve-

ment in writing. The 2020 award went to Marieke Lucas Rijneveld for *The Discomfort of Evening*.

The Booker Prize

Awarded in October each year, the Booker Prize is the UK's top literary prize and the most-watched single-book award in the English-speaking world. Winner for 2020: Shugie Bain by Douglas Stewart.

John Newbery Medal

The Newbery Medal is awarded in January each year by the American Library Association for the most distinguished American children's book published the previous year. This year's top honor went to *New Kid* by Jerry Craft, a graphic novel about learning to fit in in middle school.

Edgar Award

Mystery Writers of America is the premier organization for mystery writers, professionals allied to the crime writing field, aspiring crime writers and

those who are devoted to the genre. MWA is dedicated to promoting higher regard for crime writing and recognition and respect for those who write within the genre. Each Spring, Mystery Writers of America present the Edgar® Awards, widely acknowledged to be the most prestigious awards in the genre.

National Book Critics Circle Award

Each March, the NBCC presents awards for the finest books and reviews published in English the previous year in six categories: fiction, non-fiction, autobiography, biography, criticism and poetry.

National Book Awards

First awarded in 1950, the National Book Awards recognize the best of American literature. The Awards are announced in November.

Women's Prize for Fiction

One of the most prestigious literary awards in the world, it celebrates excellence, originality and accessibility in women's writing from throughout the world. The 2020

awards were its 25th year, and the top prize went to Maggie O'Farrell for *Hamnet*, a fascinating, fictionalized look into the life of Shakespeare's only son.

Hugo Awards

For the Sci-Fi fans, there are the Hugo Awards. These awards are administered by the World Science Fiction Convention, so you know they know the best of the best. The honor of Best Novel this year went to Arkady Martine's *A Memory Called Empire*.

The PEN/Faulkner Award

When a writing award shares its name with William Faulkner, you can bet they are choosing a book that shows complete mastery of the craft of writing. The PEN portion of the name is short for Poetry, Editors, and Novelists, a representation of those who give the award. This year's top prize for fiction went to Chloe Aridjis for *Sea Monsters*, a fantastic, surreal novel about the journey of a teenage girl to find adventure and her father's journey to find her.

The Caldecott Medal

The Caldecott Medal is named in honor of 19th-century illustrator Randolph Caldecott and is awarded annually by the Children's division of the American Library Association for excellence in illustration of children's literature. Kadir Nelson earned the honor this year for his illustrations of Kwame Alexander's *The Undeclared*.

Stoker Awards

The Stoker Award is a recognition presented annually by the Horror Writers Association for "superior achievement" in dark fantasy and horror writing. Winner: Going-back, Owl – Coyote Rage.

The Shirley Jackson Awards

Presented for outstanding achievement in horror, psychological suspense and dark fantasy fiction.

Audie Awards

The Audie Awards, sponsored by the Audio Publishers Association (APA), recognizes distinction in audiobooks and spoken word entertainment in 29 categories. The 2020 winner was *The Only Plane in the Sky: An Oral History of 9/11* by Garrett M. Graff.

Email letters to the editor to shawn.nowlin@ourvalley.org

Candy Apples and Toads

Morgan Griffith
Representative

An analogy I like to use for the legislative process invokes candy apples and toads. Legislation rarely includes only things I like – the candy apples – or omits the things I really dislike – the toads. Considering whether to support a bill usually means weighing whether there are enough candy apples to cover up the bad taste of a few toads.

End-of-year legislating usually provides plenty of opportunities to apply this test. As the year draws to a close, Congress once again finds itself closing in on a deadline to fund the Federal Government for the fiscal year that began on October 1.

As in previous years, we did not need to be in this

situation. Federal law prescribes a budget process of individual appropriations bills that should go through regular order at the committee and floor level.

Just following the rules could help us avoid the scramble to resolve everything with one bill that, even if read, Members of Congress rarely get to fully scrutinize before having to give it an up or down vote.

Because the omnibus bill funding the government for the rest of the fiscal year ending September 30 has not yet been agreed to by negotiators, Congress passed a continuing resolution (CR) continuing current funding for just one week.

Like omnibuses, I generally do not find CRs to be a proper way to fund the government. But as with any other bill I vote on, I read this CR.

It included an extension for the Rare Pediatric Disease Priority Review Vouch-

er program for two years. This program encourages the development of new drugs to treat rare pediatric diseases. The innovation promoted by this program can lead to new treatments that help improve and save the lives of children suffering from rare diseases.

While skeptical of CRs, I support the extension of the Rare Pediatric Disease Priority Review Vouchers, so I voted for this CR. In the best instances, legislation rarely includes everything I want to see or leaves out anything I do not support.

In this case, extending the program for two years was a candy apple that made voting for the one-week toad of a CR acceptable.

The Right Way to Legislate on Marijuana

In my last column, I discussed my opposition to H.R. 3884, a broad bill to legalize marijuana, expunge marijuana convictions, and provide taxpayer support

for businesses and individuals associated with the marijuana industry.

It was a sweeping, partisan effort that made major changes at a time when the Congress should have other priorities. Despite my support for changes to marijuana law, it was the wrong bill at the wrong time.

The week afterward, the House voted on another bill related to marijuana, my Medical Marijuana Research Act. I believe this was the right approach to marijuana legislation.

The Medical Marijuana Research Act would ensure a sufficient supply of research-quality marijuana through the National Institute on Drug Abuse Drug Supply Program. It also authorizes more research so that we understand more specifically the medical benefits and side effects of marijuana on the human body. It would also direct

See Griffith, page 5

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Legals - Montgomery County

ORDER OF PUBLICATION
Commonwealth of Virginia VA. CODE § 8.01-316
Case No. JJ004492-01-00 & JJ004492-02-00
RADFORD J&DR-JUVENILE DIVISION Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Commonwealth of Virginia, in re BOWLING, ALAYNA DAWN RENEE HILL, STEPHANIE IV. LAPP, KRISTEN

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Lost & Found

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Yearling all black Angus bull (700- 800 pounds) and 8 month old all white Charolais type bull. No ear tags. Missing from the corner of Springwood Rd and Timber Ridge Rd since early November. If you have any information, please call 540-354-2514

The object of this suit is to: LOCATE PARENTS.

It is ORDERED that LAPP, KRISTEN appear at the above-named Court and protect his or her interests on or before 1/19/2021 2:00pm.

11/16/2020

Sally Davis Clerk

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Legals - City of Salem

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Commonwealth of Virginia VA. CODE § 8.01-316
Case No. JJ004494-01-00 & JJ004494-02-00
RADFORD J&DR-JUVENILE DIVISION Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Commonwealth of Virginia, in re CARSTENS-ZIEGLER, ARIANA LEIGH EAST, AMANDA IV. CARSTENS, RICHARD FRANK; III

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Notice is hereby given to all interested persons that the Board of Zoning Appeals of the City of Salem, Virginia will hold a public hearing, in accordance with the provisions of Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2309 of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, on December 23, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Boulevard, in the City of Salem, Virginia, to consider the following applications.

It is ORDERED that CARSTENS, RICHARD FRANK; III appear at the above-named Court and protect his or her interests on or before 2/16/2021 2:00 pm.

10/30/2020

Sally Davis Clerk

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Request of The Trustees of Roanoke College, property owners, for a variance from Section 106-226.7 pertaining to development restrictions in a floodway, for the property located at 301 Campus Lane West Riverside Drive, Tax Map # 86-3-4. The petitioners are requesting to construct a pavilion within the floodway.

At this hearing, all parties in interest will be given an opportunity to be heard, present evidence, and show cause why such requests should or should not be granted. For additional information, contact the Office of the Zoning Administrator, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem, Virginia (Phone 375 3032).

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BY: Mary Ellen H. Wines, CZA, CFM
Zoning Administrator

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ORDER OF PUBLICATION
Commonwealth of Virginia VA. CODE § 8.01-316
Case No. JJ004492-01-00 & JJ004492-02-00
RADFORD J&DR-JUVENILE DIVISION Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Commonwealth of Virginia, in re BOWLING, ALAYNA DAWN RENEE HILL, STEPHANIE IV. BOWLING, DAVID H.

The object of this suit is to: LOCATE PARENTS.

It is ORDERED that DAVID H. BOWLING appear at the above-named Court and protect his or her interests on or before 1/19/2021 2:00pm.

11/16/2020

Sally Davis Clerk

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SPORTS

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Hokies regain Commonwealth Cup



ACC PHOTOS

The Commonwealth Cup is back in Blacksburg after a one year hiatus as Virginia Tech beat the University of Virginia in football last Saturday night, 33-15. The Hokies had won the cup for 15 straight years before Virginia's win in Charlottesville in 2019. Here Hokies celebrate following the win as captain Jarrod Hewitt (#5) holds the cup high, then gather around coach Justin Fuente. Tech, now 5-6, hopes to secure a bowl berth this week while UVA has announced it will not accept a bid if it's offered due to the coronavirus pandemic.

High School basketball season unlikely to begin next week, VHSL will not require masks to be worn in games and practices

The high school basketball season is scheduled to begin next week, but as opening day nears it appears unlikely teams will be able to play due to the coronavirus pandemic. Under current rules for practice teams are still social distancing and not allowed to share basketballs. That would make it impossible to play games. Also, the Virginia High School

League has clarified a previous announcement about wearing face coverings. On December 10, the VHSL announced that it "is requiring each school to follow the recommendations of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)" that students and coaches wear masks while participating in sports.

This requirement was issued in response to information that the Governor's Requirement to Wear Face Coverings would include such a provision. However, EO 72 when issued stated that Face Coverings requirements "do not apply to ... individuals exercising or using exercise equipment."

"VHSL apologizes for any confusion created by its original

release," said VHSL Executive Director, Dr. John W. "Billy" Haun. "We ask the public to understand that it is the first mission of VHSL to make sure that athletics are conducted in a safe and healthy environment, and it was that desire that motivated the original decision."

Accordingly, VHSL is rescinding its "requirement" that face

coverings be worn during training and competition and is reissuing its guidance to conform with the intent of EO 72 that face masks are "strongly encouraged" but not required. Each school may continue to exercise its discretion and judgment as to safety steps within its athletics programs as it pertains to face coverings.

Salem Red Sox survive minor league baseball cutdown

In conjunction with Major League Baseball's new Minor League player development structure, the Boston Red Sox invited the following clubs for continued professional affiliation last week: the Worcester Red Sox (AAA), Portland Sea Dogs (AA), Greenville Drive (A Advanced) and Salem Red Sox (A).

"We are pleased that Worcester, Portland, Greenville, and Salem have been invited to continue their affiliation and will remain part of the extended Red Sox family," said Red Sox President & CEO Sam Kennedy. "Our farm system is an essential component in our work to create a more consistent and ef-

ficient operation that helps us play October baseball each and every year. We thank our affiliates for the significant role they play in shaping our future stars, and look forward to continuing our relationship under MLB's improved player development structure."

While Salem has been moved from the Advanced Class A level to Class A, the city is happy to continue to provide Minor League Baseball to the Roanoke Valley community.

"We are delighted by our continued affiliation with the Boston Red Sox, one of MLB's premiere organizations," said Salem Red Sox Managing Director Jeff White. "A

more than decade-long partnership with the City of Salem, the entire Roanoke valley community, and the loyal employees of the Salem Sox continues. In this most difficult of times, it's a sign of continuity and hope, welcomed by all."

The lost team at Lowell was eliminated and the Pawtucket team, a Boston affiliate since 1973, was moved to Worcester.

"We are very pleased to be invited to enter into a long-term agreement with the Boston Red Sox," said Dr. Charles Steinberg, President of the Worcester Red Sox. "In this, the deep depths of December, we all long to see the next generation of Red Sox stars

take the field and bring us joy."

Portland will remain the Sox Class AA team and Greenville will now move from Class A to the Advanced Class A level.

"We thank the Red Sox for continuing to place their trust in us and going forward, to giving our amazing fans more opportunities to see future big-league stars in action, right here in Portland," said Portland Sea Dogs President & General Manager Geoff Iacuesa. "We appreciate the Red Sox commitment to the Sea Dogs, the city of Portland, and the state of Maine."

"Since the inaugural season of the Greenville Drive in 2006 our success has been built upon

strong partnerships," said Greenville Drive Owner & President Craig Brown. "Our most important partnership has been with the Boston Red Sox. We have had the privilege of being part of Major League Baseball's most storied organization for close to two decades, with our fans witnessing more than 90 players realizing their dreams by making it to the big leagues and playing for World Championships. We eagerly anticipate the return of baseball to Fluor Field this spring and welcoming the next group of Red Sox stars while we continue to build upon our unique partnership with the Boston Red Sox for years to come."

Salem Red Sox Present Holiday Film Favorite Saturday

The Salem Red Sox will have their final "holiday film favorites" this Saturday night at Salem Memorial Stadium. The Sox will offer National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, presented by Virginia Birth Father Registry, on the right field fan vision.

Gates open at 4 pm and the movie will begin at 6 pm. While admission is free, the Salem Red Sox will be collecting food donations at each event for Feeding America Southwest Virginia. Due to the current capacity restrictions, seating will be limited

to 250. The Salem Red Sox are currently accepting reservations for suites starting at just \$75. Suites feature waitress service, indoor & outdoor seating, and will guarantee admission for up to 10 guests. Suite availability is very limited.

"The Salem Red Sox are excited to welcome guests to the ballpark as we celebrate this holiday season in a safe, family-friendly environment," said General Manager, Allen Lawrence. "We hope families will be able to join us to take their

minds off this challenging year and make everlasting memories with loved ones."

The Salem Red Sox will be following all statewide safety measures, distancing guidelines and CDC recommendations. Masks are highly encouraged.

Punching for suckers



Brian Hoffman

Sports Editor

Today is day 277 AG, or eight and a half months "After Gobeert" came down with the virus and the Utah Jazz walked off the court. Since then sports events have become a week to week adventure with few or no fans in the seats and many things being called off.

It's been better lately, at least for fans, with some decent stuff to watch on TV. Remember how it was back in mid-summer, when Korean baseball was a highlight of the week and most of the sports we watched were replays of games from years gone by? Well, the recent fight between Mike Tyson and Roy Jones, Jr. was something that would have been a big event in June, but not now.

Tyson, 54, and Jones, 51 fought to a draw over eight two-

minute rounds in Los Angeles on November 28. I discovered this "event" was going to happen the day prior and thought it might be interesting to tune in. So, I checked to see what channel it would be on and found it to be on "FITE TV" and "Triller."

I get hundreds and hundreds of channels on my TV but I never even heard of those two. I get a dozen or so Spanish speaking channels and international soccer games and the golf channel. I watch old Jack Benny and Groucho Marx shows on the Jewish station and every gangster or Nazi known to exist is on some channel or another late at night. But the "Triller" channel? Is that 24 hours of Michael Jackson dancing or what?

I found the easiest way to get the fight was on pay per view, and you could buy it for "only" \$49.99. If you think 50 bucks is a little steep to see two guys box whose combined ages are 105, join the club. I wonder if anyone actually signed up for it? Not me.

As most of you realize, Tyson

is one bizarre character. Anyone who gets tattoos on their face is either a couple bricks shy of a load or planning to be in prison for a good number of years. From what I understand if you're in prison and you look really crazy they'll leave you alone. Never been there so I can't say for sure.

Tyson was at one time the heavyweight champ and a feared opponent, but that was many years ago. His explanation for his return to the ring is as strange as the man himself. He claims "Toad Venom" made him do it.

"I took the medicine, and the medicine told me to get into shape," he said, via USA Today. "It really blew my mind. It told me to come back and start getting in shape."

Now I went to college in the '70s and I did some things I'd just as soon not reveal in my column, but "Toad Venom" was never an option in my social life. I never heard of it, or knew toads had venom to begin with. After some research I found the following on the internet.

"The Addiction Center re-

leased a report in October 2019 calling toad venom a 'trendy new psychedelic' and comparing it to mescaline. The drug comes from a toad native to the Sonoran Desert that produces venom known as 5-MeO-DMT. It's reportedly about six times more powerful than the hallucinogenic DMT, or n-n-dimethyl-tryptamine."

If you can understand that you did better in chemistry than I did, and that's not a misprint, the two n's are like that. Sounds to me like it's something you might take before a Pink Floyd concert. I would think its likely illegal, but so strange there might not be a law to cover it. Can you see a security guard stopping you at the door and asking, "hey buddy, what's that croaking under your sweatshirt?"

The internet study I found went on to report. . . . "It's such an intense experience that, in most cases, doing it at a party isn't safe. It's not a recreational drug. If people get dosed too high, they can 'white out' and disassociate from their mind and body," Alan K. Davis, a clinical psychologist and assistant professor at Johns Hopkins University's psychedelic research unit, said in the report.

I knew some folks who would

pay good money to feel like that, borrowing a line from Christopher's Lloyd's "Reverend Jim" character in the classic TV sitcom "Taxi." Most of them never graduated but they were a lot of fun to be around until they flunked out.

I wonder if they checked the fighters for toad venom prior to Saturday night's "big bout?" From what I read Tyson won the early rounds before Jones came on in the last few to earn the draw. Tyson hasn't ruled out fighting again, but only exhibitions and not as a professional. I guess it depends on how many toads they can find in the desert.

Also on the card was a bout between someone named Jake Paul and former NBA basketball player Nate Robinson, who was known for his thrilling dunks despite being one of the shortest players in the league. Paul knocked Robinson out with a "brutal right hook" in the second round, leaving the former baller unconscious. I guess playing for the Knicks doesn't seem so bad after that.

And that's the way things are in 2020. Maybe instead of stimulus checks they ought to send everyone a little toad venom to help get us through the year.

Croak, croak!!